

THE MICHIGAN PASSENGER

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Michigan Association
of Railroad Passengers

www.marp.org

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RTA held its first meeting in Detroit

By Larry Sobczak

The Detroit Regional Transit Authority held its first meeting April 10 at the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments office in downtown Detroit.

The authority selected officers and established committees to handle planning, budgetary concerns and other issues.

Paul Hillegonds, a former

state GOP lawmaker, was appointed chair by Gov. Rick Snyder prior to the meeting.

Elizabeth Gerber of Washtenaw was appointed as Vice-Chair, Mark Gaffney of Wayne as Secretary and Dr. Curtis Ivery of Wayne as Treasurer. Also on the board are Roy Rose and Julie Gatti of Macomb county, Matthew Wirgau and Steven Potter of Oakland county, Richard

Murphy of Washtenaw county and Lisa Franklin of Detroit.

The authority also authorized SEMCOG to help them spend \$250,000 in state start-up appropriations up until the time they are able to establish their own spending procedures. The board still needs to work out a more permanent source of revenue.

(See RTA, page 7)



CHICAGO EXCURSIONS. The two café and four coach railcars parked on the old Art Train siding in Ann Arbor are being used for excursions to Chicago. The trips leave Ann Arbor at 4 p.m. on Fridays and return Sunday afternoon. The first planned trip is for May 17. Above, Amtrak's westbound train 353 is passing them. Check www.midwestentertainment.com for more details. (Photo by Steve Sobel)

Amtrak asks Congress for \$2 billion

Amtrak is requesting \$2.065 billion in federal capital support in its 2014 funding request to Congress.

A majority of the capital budget request is to maintain the Northeast Corridor and other Amtrak-owned or maintained infrastructure and equipment; advance the Gateway Program to expand track, tunnel and station capacity between Newark, N.J., and New York Penn Station; acquire new equipment; and improve accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

Amtrak is also requesting \$212 million for debt service.

Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman noted that some of the growth experienced by Amtrak today is the result of federal capital investments made 15

to 20 years ago, such as the Acela Express high-speed rail program and service quality and reliability improvements.

He also said the federal funding provided over the past decade to improve the resilience of the Amtrak tunnels and other infrastructure in the New York area proved vital to reduce the recovery period and provide faster restoration of intercity and commuter rail service following Hurricane Sandy.

"In recognition that the Amtrak network is a national asset operated on behalf of the federal government, the highest imperative of passenger rail legislation should be to provide dedicated, multi-year operating and capital funding to support existing intercity passenger rail services

and assets, and the development of new ones," Boardman stated.

He further explained that if Congress acted to provide the needed capital funds, it will greatly increase Amtrak's ability to efficiently and effectively deliver the services it provides while helping to sustain the partnerships that can lead to the improvement and expansion of high-speed and intercity passenger rail service in key corridors across the United States.

Amtrak is emphasizing the need for more federal capital investment to improve and expand intercity passenger rail while requesting significantly less in federal operating support.

"If we truly want to realize

(See FUNDING, page 3)

Michigan Association of Railroad
Passengers, Inc.

OFFICERS

Chair

Robert Tischbein
586-726-9737
rptischbein@juno.com

Vice Chair

Larry Kreig
734-347-2179
larry@wakeupwashtenaw.org

Secretary

Hugh Gurney
517-545-2979
hgurney@hsmichigan.org

Treasurer

David Randall
248-924-4078
boksu1@yahoo.com

REGIONAL CHAIRS

Metro Detroit

Jim Hinkins
313-881-6258
jimhinkins@yahoo.com

East/Central Michigan

Rosemary Horvath
989-506-9539
rosemaryhorvath@hotmail.com

West Michigan

Vacant
Contact MARP if you
interested in this position.
marprail@yahoo.com

Northern Michigan

Don Monteith
231-547-6854
da@chartermi.net

AT-LARGE EXECUTIVES

John D. Langdon

616-218-9009
john-langdon@sbcglobal.net

Jim Wallington

517-303-6038
jwallington@msn.com

Kay M. Chase

269-388-3777
kay.chase@wmich.edu

Kathleen Newell

310-740-0421
knewell1187@comcast.net

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Clippings from newspapers and magazines must include the
publication’s name and date. Photos sent in by e-mail should be in
JPEG format.

We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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Michigan Passenger Editor & MARP Webmaster:

Larry Sobczak, editor@marp.org
586-781-6891

Contributors:

Rosemary Hovarth

Steve Sobel

About MARP...

The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc. (MARP)
was established in 1973 as a consumer advocacy group to improve
intercity rail and bus service, improve local transit and encourage
the preservation of historic railroad stations.

MARP is not affiliated with Amtrak, the railroads, governments or
any political party. MARP is incorporated as a Michigan non-profit
organization and is exempt from federal income tax under the IRS
code, 501(c)(3) as a charitable educational organization. Dues and
donations to MARP may be tax-deductible in accordance with the
IRS code.

MARP is an all-volunteer organization. Its membership consists of
passengers and citizens who want a viable, balanced transportation
system in Michigan. We can all use the help we can get!

http://www.marp.org

marprail@yahoo.com

http://www.facebook.com/pages/michigan-association-of-railroad-passengers

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MARP Membership Application 2013

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| ☐ Advocate | \$50 |
| ☐ First Class | \$100 |
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March sets record as best month in history of Amtrak

Amtrak ridership increased in the first half of fiscal year 2013 (Oct. 2012 – March 2013) and March set a record as the single best month ever in the history of the railroad. In addition, October, December, and January each set individual monthly records.

Rebounding strongly from service disruptions caused by Hurricane Sandy and other severe weather, Amtrak ridership grew 0.9 percent in the first six months of FY 2013 as compared to the same period the prior year. In all, 26 of 45 routes posted ridership increases and Amtrak expects to end the fiscal year at or above last year’s record of 31.2 million passengers.

“The continued ridership growth on routes across the country reinforces the need for dedicated, multi-year federal operating and capital funding to support existing intercity passenger rail services and the development of new ones,” said Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman.

Northeast Corridor ridership, which took a significant hit from Hurricane Sandy, is seeing a sol-



SPLITTING SIGNALS. Amtrak’s Eastbound train 350, the Wolverine, splits the signals at CP Ypsilanti on a dreary April day. The train connects Chicago and Detroit and it saw an increase in ridership of 8.2 percent in the first six months of the current fiscal year. (Photo by Steve Sobel)

id recovery and is predicted to show gains for the full fiscal year despite being down 1.2 percent for this six-month period. Ridership on state-supported and other short distance routes is up 2.7 percent and long-distance ridership grew 0.5 percent.

Routes with notable ridership growth in the first six months of FY 2013 include: Palmetto (+10.5 percent), Coast Starlight (+10 percent), Illini/Saluki (+9.8 percent), San Joaquin (+8.9 percent), Piedmont (+8.6 percent), **Wolverine (+8.2 percent)**, Ver-

monter (+6.7 percent), Carolinian (+6.3 percent), Keystone Service (+5.2 percent), Springfield Shuttles (+5.2 percent), Downeaster (+4.8 percent), Pacific Surfliner (+4.3 percent), and Pennsylvanian (+4.3 percent).

FUNDING (Continued from page 1)

our vision of what rail can offer America, in terms of real mobility improvements and rational modal choices, policy decisions must be made and funding provided to match them. These are big decisions, and will require bold thinking, but they will deliver value for the money,” said Boardman.

Boardman explained Amtrak ridership, revenue, on-time performance and other leading indicators are at record levels or improving. Since 2010, for ev-

ery dollar of federal investment, Amtrak has placed nearly \$3 back into the economy. These achievements, he said, provide “tangible evidence of the public benefit federal investment in Amtrak delivers to the taxpayer, the traveling public and the American economy.”

He stressed that since the federal government established Amtrak as the foundation of a national intercity passenger rail system, the modernizing and maintaining of that system is a significant federal responsibility, including the operation of long-distance routes.

For FY 2014, Amtrak is seeking \$373 million in federal oper-

ating support or about 17 percent less than it requested in FY 2013. This is made possible by an improved financial position where last fiscal year Amtrak covered 88 percent of its operating costs with ticket sales and other non-federal revenue sources, up from 85 percent the prior year.

Amtrak covers 88% of costs

Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman told a Congressional committee March 5 that the national passenger railroad is leveraging record ridership to reduce dependence on federal operating subsidies. He announced that in fiscal year 2012 the federal government paid just 12 percent of Amtrak’s operating costs while Amtrak covered 88 percent with ticket sales and other revenue.

Boardman explained that while the railroad has taken actions to chip away at operating costs and increase revenue, a vital component of its success has been the federal government’s willingness to invest in the Amtrak national network. Federal capital investment helps to reduce operating costs, supports the existing system, funds solutions to reduce future costs and

In addition, if current service levels are maintained, Amtrak’s state revenues in FY 2014 should increase by approximately \$85 million as Amtrak and the states implement a Congressional requirement on cost allocation for short-distance routes.

provides the infrastructure and equipment to sustain ridership and revenue growth.

“Previous federal capital investment levels have sufficed to keep the system going, but they are not going to be adequate in the future,” Boardman stressed. “If we are to realize rail’s potential, we will need much higher levels of federal capital funding.”

He added that the Amtrak long distance trains are an important part of a larger national network connecting rural communities to larger cities and major urban areas. They serve passengers with disabilities, the elderly and rural populations that are losing scheduled intercity air and bus service. In fact, long distance trains bring one million riders a year to the Northeast Corridor.

MARP’s postal address has changed:



**P.O. Box 180076
Utica, MI 48318-0076**

Please take note when sending your new membership form or your membership renewal.

We can also be contacted at marpail@yahoo.com.

Visit www.marp.org

Celebrate National Train Day on Saturday, May 11

On Saturday, May 11, 2013, Amtrak will join communities across America to celebrate the importance of trains to their towns at the sixth annual National Train Day. More than 200 communities are expected to host events at local train stations, railroad museums and other locations commemorating this year’s theme “Trains Matter.”

“National Train Day invites communities big and small to share the importance of trains as a vital transportation option and engine of economic development and employment,” said Amtrak Chief Marketing and Sales Officer Matt Hardison.

In addition to events in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Los Angeles, Amtrak is expanding its efforts to support events in many local markets across the country served by America’s Railroad®. Event offerings will vary to include train equipment displays, family-friendly activities and local dignitaries.

Details on National Train Day events and information on how to host a National Train Day event are available at NationalTrainDay.com. Additional events and information will be added to the website frequently. In addition, rail passengers and enthusiasts are invited to share why trains matter to them via Facebook or @natltrainday.

Here are Michigan events listed on the National Train Day website:

Ann Arbor, MI (ARB), 325 Depot Street, Ann Arbor MI 48104
7 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Join us on National Train Day for train travel information, donuts, coffee and City proclamation.

Bangor, MI (BAM), 541 Railroad Street, Bangor MI 49013
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.: The celebration will kick off with the arrival of the Pere Marquette train at which time a proclamation will be read to the Amtrak Crew by the Bangor City Mayor. The family-friendly event will include Amtrak Junior Conductor Hats, 2013 National Train Day stickers, train travel planning information available from the Michigan Association of Rail-

road Passengers Volunteer Station Host, live music, a HO scale model railroad layout, and much more; with refreshments served throughout the event.

Birmingham, MI (BMM), Villa Road and Lewis Street, Birmingham MI 48009
5:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.: Interactive NTD event with station passengers and visitors, promoting national system of passenger rail service and enhancements that are occurring. Focus will be the under construction new facility across the tracks for the Troy Birmingham train station. First early a.m. event will be with the arrival/departure of Train #351 and the afternoon arrival/departure of Train #350.

Dearborn, MI (DER), 16121 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn, MI 48126
6 a.m. to 11 a.m.: Join us for National Train Day! Enjoy free coffee and donuts. Flyers will be distributed.

Detroit, MI (DET), 11 W. Baltimore Ave, Detroit MI 48202
7 a.m. to 11 a.m.: Coffee, bagels, and donuts will be available for the first 30 people.

Durand Train Enthusiasts, Exchange Road, Durand MI 48429
9 a.m. to 10 p.m.: Pack your cooler, favorite lawn chair, and hangout near the tracks in Michigan’s favorite train spotters town, Durand. Stay for the week and enjoy the Durand Railroad Days Festival the following weekend. As usual, safety first! Stay off the tracks!

East Lansing, MI (LNS), 1240 South Harrison Road, East Lansing MI 48823
8 a.m. to 10 a.m.: Join us for a National Train Day celebration organized by Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers!

Ferndale, MI - Rainy Day Hobbies - National Train Day Open House, 22929-22941 Woodward Avenue, Ferndale MI 48220
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.: Open House celebrating all things trains! Model railroad layouts, model train demonstrations, videos of trains & destinations, train control demonstrations, children’s’ train coloring contest - winner wins a train set! Food & Beverages! HO - O - N Scale trains and wooden trains!



Flint, MI (FLN), 1407 South Dort Highway, Flint MI 48503
6:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: Displays of National Association of Railway Business Women, Operation Lifesaver, Model Train Layout (running), Mid- Michigan Railroad Historical Society, refreshments, drawing for RR related items. Colorsheets/hats for the kids. Organizers are attempting to get rail equipment for display.

Holland, MI (HOM), 171 Lincoln Avenue, Holland MI 49423
7 a.m. to 9 a.m.: The celebration will kick off with the arrival of the Pere Marquette train at which time a proclamation will be read to the Amtrak Crew by the Holland Elected Officials. The family-friendly event will include Amtrak Junior Conductor Hats, 2013 National Train Day stickers, and train travel planning information available from the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers Volunteer Station Host, and much more with refreshments served throughout the event.

Jackson, MI (JXN), 501 East Michigan Avenue, Jackson MI 49201
8 a.m. to 2 p.m.: The National Train Day event will feature free kids’ activities sponsored by Chuggington, interactive and educational exhibits, model train displays and giveaways.

Jackson District Library, 244 West Michigan Avenue, Jackson MI 49201
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.: Michael Hodges, author of “Michigan’s Historic Railroad Stations” will be giving a lecture and slideshow on Michigan depots. There will be time for Q & A with the author and book sale and signing.

Kalamazoo, MI (KAL), 498 North Burdick Street, Kalamazoo MI 49007
8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.: N Scale Model Train Layout, Literature, Jr. Conductor Hats and Amtrak Guidebooks to be Available

Lapeer, MI 48446 - Sidetracks, 266 Lake Nepessing Road, Lapeer MI 48446
11 a.m. to midnight: Come enjoy a great meal with us, stay for the band or relax on our patio and watch the trains go by.

Lapeer, MI - Roadside Attractions, 3501-3681 South Lapeer Road, Metamora MI 48455
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: The eight month restoration of an 1895 wooden railway caboose from the Grand Trunk Railway is finally complete. Come explore life as a caboose foreman, listen to stories of the railroad, view our LEGO rail yard, play with Thomas the Tank Engine toys, visit craft stations and cool off with free ice cream.

New Buffalo, MI (NBM), 226 North Whittaker Street, New Buffalo MI 49117
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: Publicizing National Train Day and the New Buffalo Railroad Museum by greeting passengers traveling on the 11:24 am train from New Buffalo to Chicago and passengers traveling on the 12:50 pm train from Chicago to New Buffalo. We will have signs, literature and treats.

Niles, MI (NLS), 902 North 5th Street, Niles MI 49120
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: National Train Day- Celebrating the history of the Niles Amtrak Depot-flow-ers for all the ladies, like the Michigan Central did 100 years ago, beautiful gardens to enjoy, slide show of the Depot gardens through the years, cake, cookies and refreshments for all, toy trains for the kids and more.

Niles, MI - Fernwood’s Railway Garden, 13988 Range Line Road, Niles MI 49120
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.: Celebrate National Train Day at Fernwood Botanical Garden, Berrien County’s only botanical garden. See the Railway Garden designed by Paul Busse and his team at Applied Imagination, designers of more than 100 railway gardens across the U.S. Four G-scale trains run along tracks at various levels, from ground level to overhead. Trains cross trestles and bridges, and pass a waterfall, pond, and scale buildings made of natural materials that represent local historical buildings. Located near the new children’s nature adventure garden.

S.S. City of Milwaukee proudly sailed Lake Michigan



The S.S. City of Milwaukee is moored in Elberta in 1990, the same year it became a National Historic Landmark. (Photo by Bill Herd)

by Rosemary Horvath

Imagination is the only passport needed to board the S.S. City of Milwaukee, moored on Manistee Lake since 2000 and a National Historic Landmark since 1990.

For decades the vessel ferried railroad cars back and forth from Milwaukee to the Michigan shoreline for Grand Trunk's railroad car ferry company.

Built by the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company, the City of Milwaukee replaced the S.S. Milwaukee that sank Oct. 22, 1929 bound for Grand Haven, in a horrific storm, killing all 52 people on board.

She launched Nov. 25, 1930, and arrived in Grand Haven Jan. 17, 1931, carrying a full load of Case tractors on flat cars.

Grand Trunk's operations were moved from Grand Haven to Muskegon July 1933.

The Historic Naval Ships Association describes the 347-foot vessel on its website as the last surviving traditional Great Lakes railroad car ferry.

These sturdy vessels navigated the frozen and storm-tossed inland seas carrying entire freight trains for a century.

The City of Milwaukee features two triple expansion steam engines and four Scotch fire tube boilers. The sturdy ice breaking

riveted steel hull is complimented by varnished oak and brass interiors done in the craftsman style.

The City of Milwaukee was the last of six ships built to the same design by the Manitowoc builder. This group was considered to be at the aesthetic peak of car ferry design.

Michigan railroad car ferries that served the Great Lakes for more than a century were considered as the "moveable bridge" between Michigan railroad terminals and their counterparts in other states and Canada. The S.S. Badger is the only railroad car ferry boat still in operation from Ludington to Manitowoc, but it only carries passengers and vehicles.

Ferry transportation began November 1892 when the Ann Arbor No. 1 sailed from Kewaunee, Wis. to Frankfort, Mich. (then called Elberta) with 22 freight cars.

Routes crossing the lake were favored because it eliminated wasted time in crowded rail yards of Chicago.

But by 1976, the railroad car ferry industry was hanging by a thread. Giant ships became expensive in terms of maintenance, labor and fuel costs rose. The rules governing railroads rendered the industry inefficient.

This industry that had once

SAVE THE DATE !

MARP Meets Aboard S.S. City of Milwaukee

On Aug. 10, MARP will hold its member meeting aboard the historic S.S. City of Milwaukee, berthed in Manistee. MARP members will have an opportunity to bunk aboard the ship on the nights of Aug. 9 and Aug. 10. For those who prefer less spartan quarters, there is a reasonably priced motel nearby.

The members of the historic society responsible for preserving and presenting the ship will attend the MARP meeting and will hold a weekend of special anniversary activities.

This will be a rare opportunity to experience life aboard this classic train car ferry.

Look for more information in coming issues of ON TRACK, The Michigan Passenger and www.marp.org.

strengthened local economies became a victim of their maladies in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Elberta had stagnated after losing its charcoal-iron industry. Its economy revitalized when the car-ferry service was established to Manitowoc, Menominee and Manistique. Five ships entered or departed from the Elberta port daily year-round.

The City of Milwaukee survived termination of car ferry service from Muskegon in 1978.

On Nov. 1 that year it made her last run for Grand Trunk and on Nov. 11.

The ferry steamed to Elberta where it was chartered to the Ann Arbor Railroad Company and began the Frankfort to Kewaunee, Wis. service.

In 1979 Grand Trunk sold her to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

In 1983 the city of Frankfort bought the car ferry from MDOT for \$2. Frankfort residents and the Northwest Michigan Maritime Museum had petitioned the state and saved the vessel from the scrapers.

The city was unable to procure a mooring site around the historic Ann Arbor Railroad Marine Terminal at the harbor.

In 1988 The Society for the Preservation of the SS City of Milwaukee bought her from the city for \$2. She was towed to Manistee in January 2000.

Rosemary Horvath is MARP's East/Central Chair and a journalist.

Two authors speak at two MARP meetings about their books

Attendees to MARP meetings in Capac on Feb. 9 and St. Johns on March 9 were treated to history presentations by two Michigan authors.

In Capac, T. J. Gaffney, former Director of the Steam Railroading Institute in Owosso and Curator of Collections at the Port Huron Museum reviewed a wealth of material from his recently published book, “Rails around the Thumb. “

Gaffney said that Port Huron itself was the center of railroading in the Thumb area with a plethora of rail facilities including a round house with turntable, railroad bridges, depots, and docks, from which car ferries transported rail cars across the St. Clair River to Sarnia, Ontario.

Gaffney’s interest in local and rail history comes from his father, who collected over 20,000 post cards dealing with St. Clair County, and from Orv Swift of the Grand Trunk Railroad.

In St. Johns, Michael H. Hodges, author of the recently published “Michigan’s Historic Railroad Stations,” spoke about the history and architecture of Michigan’s most interesting and picturesque railroad stations.

He described his own odyssey in researching and photographing these architectural gems as “giddy seasons spent crisscrossing the state, windows

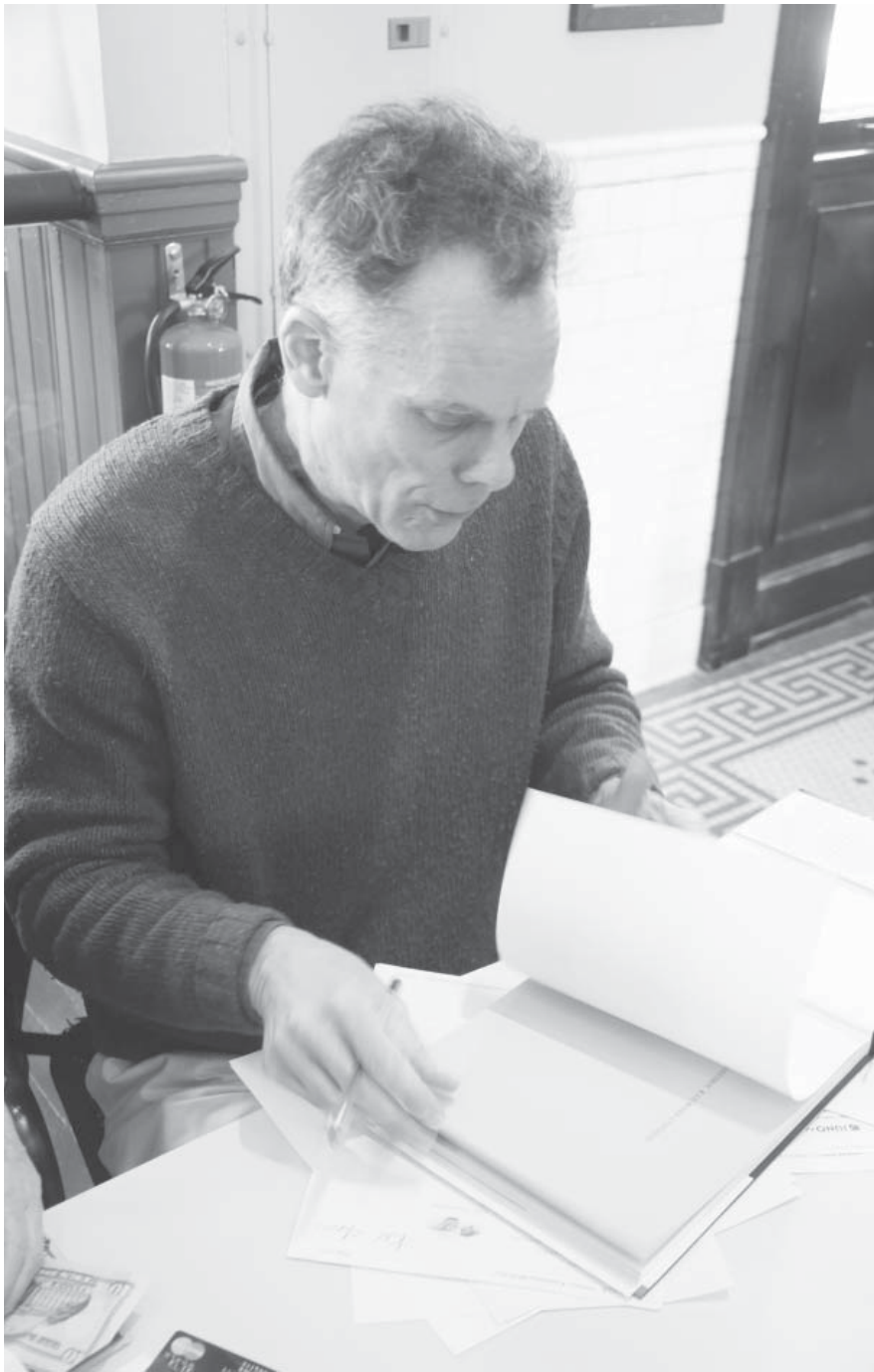


Above, MARP members listen to a speaker during the March 9, meeting in the St. Johns Depot. Below right, author Michael Hodges signs copies of his book in St. Johns. Bottom photo, Hodges speaks to MARP members as host Jenny Campbell looks on.(Photos by Steve Sobel.)

down, iPod on, poking into unknown little towns, searching, sometimes high and low, for railroad tracks that may or may not have been removed.”

Mr. Hodges, who is the fine arts writer for the Detroit News, traces his fascination with architecture to his years as a student at the Cranbrook School. He became intrigued with railroad stations while working on a story about a homeless man living in Detroit’s abandoned Michigan Central Station.

Both authors signed copies of their books after their lectures.



Tentative MARP meeting schedule 2013

- May** – National Train Day activities pre-empt monthly meeting
- June 15** – Vicksburg Depot Museum
- July 20** – Flushing Depot Museum
- August 9-10-11**–Historic Train ferry City of Milwaukee

- berthed and open in Manistee; possible overnight stays
- September 14** – Durand Union Station for the annual meeting –Kevin Keefe of Trains magazine is the speaker
- October 12** –Grand Haven Depot Museum

- November 2 or 9** – Albion Amtrak Depot
- December** – executive meeting only
- Check www.marp.org for additions and changes to this schedule.
- MARP meetings are held in various places around the

state in order to give everyone a chance to participate. Meeting announcements are posted on the website www.marp.org and include program information and driving directions. Meeting minutes are archived on the website so you can review past topics discussed.

From the Boardroom: Why connect?

**By Rosemary Horvath
Chair, East/Central Region**

Volunteering to promote Amtrak travel and MARP's mission during the annual February Das Dutchman Essenhaus Train Show in Middlebury sounded like a pleasant way to experience my first-ever train show.

After all, the northern Indiana Amish-themed tourist stop is a renown comfort escape and I'd surely have time to stroll model train displays, or so I thought.

Nothing prepared me for the beehive swirling around our table in the crowded conference center.

I soon mastered turning flattened heavy-duty paper Amtrak Junior Conductor hats into hats children prized and wore, but deferred most questions about train travel to my fellow volunteers John Langdon of Holland and Ron Leatz of Dowagiac.

At the end of five hours, we had distributed some 300 junior conductor hats/activity books and hundreds of Amtrak timetables, travel brochures and guides.

Gratifying was watching a girl or boy call out "all abroad" imagining life as a train conductor and adults imagining the lure of beautiful scenery aboard a train.

Nearly all the parents, couples and singles -- seasoned travelers and those who are not -- walked away satisfied knowing more about potential long or short-distance trips they hoped to take one day.

Luckily, Langdon was aboard. This MARP executive committee member in charge of governmental affairs exercised his marketing skills from a past life by simultaneously drawing in visitors while reaching for brochures. He handed over one of his MARP identification cards to those too squeamish to maneuver Amtrak's website intended only for those who know where and when they plan to travel. "Call me and I can walk you through it," he offered.



Ron Leatz of Dowagiac, left, and Rosemary Horvath, right, staff the MARP table at the Das Dutchman Essenhaus Train Show in Middlebury, Indiana.

Langdon has worked and planned enough train shows that he systematically arranges material on table tops with MARP information to the far left next to west-to-east travel booklets laid flat across the table. Upright in clear plastic slots are timetables and tourist information. Some members note John has too much material. But if Middlebury is the rule, one can expect visitors to have relatives living anywhere in North America, meaning some of our questions pertained to Canadian travel.

A great many visitors to our table said they resided in outlying areas of Middlebury and named the Waterloo Amtrak station as their departure point. This station caters to the Capitol Limited and Lake Shore Limited routes. Its location is 30 miles north of Fort Wayne, or about an hour from Middlebury, which is geographically closer to Elkhart or even South Bend, but people

preferred picking up the easterly station, especially to avoid driving west and training east. Some even mentioned picking up a train further east in Bryan, Ohio.

I expected MARP's presence at a train show would help us to solicit new members. We had copies of The Michigan Passenger available that visitors overlooked. If there had been time, one of us might have distributed information about MARP to people working at the show. Vendors appeared to be collectors, hobbyists and entrepreneurs centered on model railroading. It is possible their interests extended to passenger rail.

While the MARP banner name was eye-catching, for most of the day the area in front of the table was too congested for anyone to see it skirting the table-front. A MARP placard on the table was overshadowed, because the main focus was truly Amtrak

travel. Only Ron was wearing a red vest denoting the MARP name.

MARP will have a presence at model train shows in metro Detroit, Mount Pleasant, Port Huron, Lapeer and Toledo this year. All are excellent opportunities to interact with the public to promote modern-day train travel and to advertise the mission of MARP.

Rosemary Horvath lives in Crystal Township in Montcalm County. She has practiced her profession of journalism in four states and has freelanced for area newspapers since 2008. In addition to her interest in trains, she helped found the Crystal Township Historical Society, believes in the preservation of historic buildings and protection of the environment. She celebrates living in a state that has a connection to Ernest Hemingway and Sparky Anderson.

RTA (Continued from page 1)

The authority chose the law firm Miller Canfield, who offered to donate "significant" pro-bono time, to represent them -- with the details to be hammered out by the organization's executive committee.

The establishment of the RTA's Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) was also discussed, with board member Gerber suggesting it have a rotating membership. More information about the CAC should be available at

SEMOG's website, the temporary online home of the RTA.

Of particular interest to MARP members is the inclusion of rail in the RTA's transit plans.

The RTA's enabling legislation requires unanimous approval of any regional rail plans.

As of press time, the authority has not indicated any direction it may take on the M-1 light rail project proposed along Woodward Avenue from downtown Detroit to the New Center Area and MiTrain, a planned regional rail link along Amtrak's Wolverine route between the cities of Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Summer youth program at Mich Tech seeking high school age applicants

Michigan Technological University, Houghton MI, is offering a week long summer youth program designed to create awareness of, and stimulate interest in, the world of rail and intermodal transportation. Students will learn why trains are called the "green transportation alternative", how fast high-speed passenger trains move, and how containers find their way from China to USA.

The program is open to current 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students. Included are technical

tours to rail and intermodal facilities in Marquette, MI and Duluth, MN. Full scholarships are available to all who are accepted in the program.

The program is a collaborative effort by Michigan Tech's Rail Transportation Program and the Transportation and Logistics Management Program at University of Wisconsin—Superior.

For more details and a program application, visit http://www.syp.mtu.edu/docs/RTP_App.pdf

Illinois to lead multi-state locomotive purchase

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has named Illinois to lead the multi-state procurement of next-generation locomotives for high-speed rail.

With the consent of the partnering states, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will lead the effort to procure at least 35 next-generation diesel locomotives for high-speed passenger trains on behalf of five states – Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington.

“This important multi-state procurement is a key to success for high-speed rail throughout the nation and I have directed my administration to move forward quickly,” Illinois Governor Pat Quinn said.

The FRA has allocated \$808 million to build the next generation of passenger rail equipment, including 35 new locomotives and 130 bi-level rail cars.

As lead agency, IDOT will manage and oversee the procurement, involve the other states in planning and implementing the procurement process, develop a detailed project plan, and coordinate the review of the procurement among the involved states and FRA.

“Our goal is to offer 110-mile-per-hour service on at least 75 percent of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor – the segment from Dwight to Alton – by the end of 2015, and these locomotives are the key to achieving that goal,” Illinois Secretary of Transportation Ann L. Schneider said. “It takes time to build these complex and powerful engines, however, and we are moving quickly to get this procurement under way as soon as possible.”

Last year, IDOT was part of a multi-state procurement of the 130 next-generation bi-level rail cars for high-speed service, an effort led by the state of California. That procure-

ment resulted in the selection of Nippon-Sharyo, which is building the rail cars from its plant in Rochelle, Illinois, including the 88 cars to be used on Midwest high-speed corridors. The Rochelle plant opened in 2012 and has created 250 jobs in Illinois.

Illinois debuted 110-mph service on a 15-mile segment of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor from Dwight to Pontiac in fall 2012.

The FRA in December provided a Record of Decision on the entire Chicago-St. Louis corridor, allowing Illinois to begin in-depth corridor segment studies and specific project studies to move toward high-speed service including segments from Joliet to Chicago and from Alton to St. Louis.

Illinois also is working in close partnership with the state of Michigan to establish 110-mph service from Chicago to Detroit as the next Midwest segment targeted to run at higher speeds.



Progress at the Troy Transit Center

The pedestrian bridge for the Troy Transit Center is rising along the Canadian National Railroad tracks in Oakland County as pictured here on March 30.

Construction of the station is expected to be completed later this year on the 28,000 square foot facility that includes a 2,000-square-foot building with a waiting area and public restrooms, a pedestrian bridge to the Amtrak platform, bus docks, taxi stands and parking.

It is being built on a 2.4 acre parcel behind a shopping center located on Doyle Drive near Maple Road and Coolidge Road at a cost of \$6.3 million.

Financing of the transit center came from a Federal Railroad Administration grant awarded in 2009.

Once completed, the new station will replace the Amtrak shelter located in Birmingham, a few hundred yards north of the new station. Photos by Steve Sobel.

